

Fowler Connell: Writer, Broadcaster and Hall of Famer

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Fowler Connell is one of the best sports journalists Vermilion County has ever seen, read or heard. He has covered Vermilion County sports through the Commercial News and WDAN radio for more than fifty years. Currently Fowler is retired from the Danville newspaper business but still does sport talk shows throughout the week.

Fowler Connell was born in Chicago, Illinois. He later moved to Kansas City with his family where he spent most of his childhood. After finishing school, Fowler joined the Navy and fought in World War II. Fowler spent three years at war at sea aboard the USS *Boston*. After serving in the Navy, Fowler went to the University of Missouri and studied journalism. After graduating in 1949, Fowler moved to central Illinois and started his career in journalism.

Fowler first started working for the Danville Commercial News in the early 1950s. Fowler wrote many high school and collegiate sports articles. Throughout his career he has covered high school teams in Danville, Bismarck, Westville, Georgetown, Covington, Hoopeston, Rossville, Clinton, and many other nearby towns. Fowler has also covered the Danville Area Community College Jaguars and the University of Illinois Fighting Illini.

As Fowler's time at the newspaper went on he eventually received so much praise that he was given his own section of the sports page known as "Connell's Corner." Some of Fowler's most popular series of articles were the trips of "Harry and Frank". These articles were filled with sports conversation between these two characters on their trip to

a water hole. The stories of Frank and Harry were usually filled with clever arguments about each other's favorite sports teams, for example, Frank's Chicago Cubs versus Harry's St. Louis Cardinals. Another series of famous articles Fowler wrote were the annual Christmas Lists. In these lists, Fowler discussed what certain teams (high school collegiate, or pro) were or should be wishing for.

In December 1989, Fowler left the Danville Commercial News and went into retirement. On December 18, 1989, the Commercial News posted an article of all of Fowler's favorite local and Illini related sporting events that he had covered in his 37 years with the paper.

After working with the paper for so long, Fowler could not keep away from the games and doing what he loves. Fowler then went to the local radio station and began doing sports talk shows throughout the week. Fowler also does Saturday Morning Sports Talk on WDAN 1490 along with sports fanatic Harry Eisenhower, former Danville High School baseball coach Bob Kay, and WDAN Radio station manager Mike Hulvey.

Along with these sports shows, Fowler does Fighting Illini pre-game shows for both the football and basketball teams before every Illini game. Fowler also covers the Danville High School athletic groups on WDAN 1490 throughout the school year. During the summers Fowler and the WDAN crew cover the Danville Dans in the Central Illinois Collegiate League.

Fowler Connell currently serves on the University of Illinois Media Corps. and is currently its longest serving member. He has served on this committee for over 50 years. Recently with the help of the Commercial News and Neuhoff Broadcasting, Fowler has

put together a collection of his favorite articles throughout his career entitled Sports Through My Eyes.

Fowler has been a dominant sports journalist over the past 50 years in and around Vermilion County. He has covered many high school and collegiate sports and has witnessed many amazing sporting events. Fowler Connell may be one of the best sports journalists Vermilion County has ever had. [From Fowler Connell, Sports Though My Eyes; WDAN Radio Stations. <http://wdan.allarounddanville.com/html/showhosts.htm> (Nov. 26, 2005).]